

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed May 4, 2006. Claims 8-21, 25 and 29-34 were pending in the Application. Claims 8-21, 25 and 29-34 remain pending in the Application.

In the Office Action, the following actions were taken or matters were raised:

ALLOWED CLAIMS

In the Office Action, the Examiner appears to indicate that Claims 25 and 29-34 are allowable. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the allowance of Claims 25 and 29-34. Claims 25 and 29-34 remain unchanged. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 25 and 29-34 remain in condition for allowance.

SECTION 102 REJECTIONS

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,402,430 issued to Fox (hereinafter "Fox"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant thanks Examiner Davis for the telephone conference held on November 2, 2006, with James L. Baudino during which Claim 21 was discussed in view of the *Fox* reference. In the above-referenced telephone conference, the Examiner acknowledged that *Fox* does not anticipate Claim 21. For example, *Fox* does not disclose "first and second portions operable to cooperate with each other to form an instrument receiving slot for receiving at least a portion of said medical instrument, said first and second portions further operable to cooperate with each other to form an accessory receiving slot for receiving at least one accessory" as recited by Claim 21. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 21 be withdrawn.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

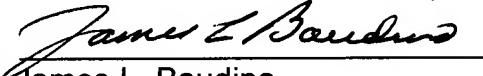
In the Office Action, based on the Examiner's rejection of only Claim 21, The Examiner appears to indicate that Claims 8-20 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim (Claim 21). As indicated above, Claim 21 is patentable over the cited *Fox* reference. Therefore, Claims 8-20 that depend therefrom are also allowable. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection of Claims 8-20 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for immediate allowance. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

A Petition for Extension of Time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a)(1) for a three (3) month extension is enclosed hereto. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$510.00 for the cost for obtaining the three month extension of time. If, however, Applicant has miscalculated the fee due with this response or overlooked the need for any other fee, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayment associated with this response to Deposit Account No. 13-4900 of Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, P.C.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 3, 2006

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